CHRISTIANITY & THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

By Albert Schweitzer

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Schweitzer, Albert, 1875-1965.
Christianity and the religions of the world

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The Quest of the Historical Jesus.
Paul and his Interpreters.
Johann Sebastian Bach.
On the Edge of the Primeval Forest.
The Philosophy of Civilization.

Selly Oak Colleges Publications No. 3

CHRISTIANITY AND THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

SELLY OAK COLLEGES
CENTRAL COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS.

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CHRISTIANITY AND THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE SELLY OAK COLLEGES, BIRMINGHAM, FEBRUARY 1922

BY

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LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
RUSKIN HOUSE, 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C. 1

23-86

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S3

First published in 1923

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Printed in Great Britain by
UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED, THE GRESHAM PRESS, LONDON AND WOKING

FOREWORD

The lectures of which this book is composed need no glossary or comment, but many who will read them have not seen the author's face nor heard his voice. To them a brief introduction may be serviceable, for a man himself is the best commentary on his books ; and, indeed, I think it behoves us all to know what manner of man it is who speaks to us in these pages. To some he is known, and generally mis-known, in connection with that dreadful word "Interimsethik;" to others, again, he is the greatest living expounder and interpreter of Bach ; to others, the strange man who is burying himself in Central Africa, when all the world of art and culture lies open to him in Europe. It is thought, therefore, that some slight personal impression of him will be of interest and advantage to those who know him only through some of his books or through his matchless organ-playing. It will be understood that in this sketch I am making no attempt to write the biography of Albert

Schweitzer up to date—*serus in cœlum redeat*—nor to expound his philosophy, but to give such personal notes as may predispose the reader to catch the tone of voice, the passion and the power, that lie behind these lectures.

We welcomed Dr. Schweitzer on his brief visit to the Selly Oak Colleges with interest and enthusiasm, qualified by awe and anxiety ; for being a young institution we have not yet learned how to receive the great as though we were accustomed to their company and proof against it. But if our reverence increased, we soon forgot all our anxiety. Praed said about the old vicar and his sermons that

> Sure a righteous zeal inspired
> The head and hand that penned and planned them,
> For all who understood admired,
> And some who did not understand them.

We might say much the same of Dr. Schweitzer and his lectures, except that, unfortunately, he had planned but not penned them (that is why this book appears so late), and that we would say "loved" rather than "admired." It is not easy to explain in words that will not appear extravagant how greatly we were drawn to the man himself. We knew he was strong, but we found him gentle ; we have not often seen such

intellectual freedom coupled with so evangelical a zeal.

I have had many letters from Dr. Schweitzer since then, all or almost all on business of one kind or another, all written in haste and without premeditation, but they bear, to my feeling, a strangely apostolic flavour. This is the manner of them: "The cloak that I left at Troas send on and the manuscripts . . . Greet Euodia and Syntyche . . . In labours many, in distresses, in weariness, yet not unto despair . . . I must press on to Lamberene . . . The spirit of Jesus hindered me . . . the sufferings of this present time . . . in travail until Christ be formed in them . . . in Christ neither black nor white." There is in truth something Pauline in these brief notes—Paul qualified by Bach and equipped as a modern doctor.

Dr. Schweitzer was born at Kaysersberg in Alsace, and comes of a ministerial family. At Strasbourg he was first student, then professor. He rapidly became the *enfant terrible* of the theological world, chiefly through his famous work, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus.* At about the same time he wrote his monumental book on Johann Sebastian Bach and became organist of the Paris Bach Society; but the sequel showed

that as a theologian (and perhaps as a musician also) he had been misunderstood. His mind was seen to be like a knife to dissect the theories and interpretations which dim-eyed scholars had imposed upon the figure of Jesus, but few realized that behind his own strange and striking construction lay a vision of the Lord, piercing and compelling as that which came to the seer of old in Patmos. The Christian ethic may indeed be but for that "little while" of which the fourth Gospel speaks, but it is absolute and knows no compromise. It is binding on all Christian men.

But theories are of yesterday and to-day; deeds are for ever. At the age of thirty or so Dr. Schweitzer abandoned the world of letters and of art that he might qualify in medicine as a general practitioner. By means of his books and his organ recitals and the help of sympathetic friends he gathered means and set sail at his own charges for Lamberene on the River Ogowe in Equatorial Africa. With him went his heroic wife, his partner in courage and patience through dangers, labours, loneliness, sickness and anxiety.

His experiences in Africa have been told in his book *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest*, one of those uncommon missionary books which it is delightful as well as profitable to read. The

Paris Bach Society had presented Dr. Schweitzer with a pedal piano adapted to the tropical heats. In the brief rest from hospital work in the middle of the day he would turn again to music, and gives us to understand that Bach spoke to him with deeper meaning in the silence and solitude of the forests of Central Africa.

Dr. Schweitzer kindly made a great effort to supply me with some biographical information for this sketch, but the effort has not been a great success. It begins *pianissimo* with muted instruments and some half page of facts, which apart from his birthplace I knew already. Then it breaks out through several pages *forte fortissimo* :—

> Desperate tides of the whole great world's anguish
> Forced thro' the channels of a single heart.

Africa, he says, sits "like Lazarus" at the gate of Europe's house; "medical service amongst the natives of the colonial peoples is a necessary function of Christian civilization"—a small part of the debt of the white man to the black, a work of mercy which should be laid upon the conscience of the Christian world. In this appeal the whole man stands revealed—*stat totus Cæsar in armis.* Those who think of Dr. Schweitzer only as a left-wing higher critic should read of his work in Lamberene :—

"The operation is finished, and in the hardly lighted dormitory I watch for the sick man's awakening. Scarcely has he recovered consciousness when he stares about him and ejaculates again and again: 'I have no more pain! I have no more pain!' . . . His hand feels for mine and will not let it go. Then I begin to tell him and the others who are in the room that it is the Lord Jesus who has told the doctor and his wife to come to the Ogowe, and that white people in Europe give them the money to live here and cure the sick negroes. Then I have to answer questions as to who these white people are, where they live, and how they know that the natives suffer so much from sickness. The African sun is shining through the coffee bushes into the dark shed, but we, black and white, sit side by side and feel that we know by experience the meaning of the words: 'And all ye are brethren' (Matt. xxiii. 8). Would that my generous friends in Europe could come out here and live through one such hour!"

At the end of 1917 Dr. Schweitzer returned to Europe sick in body and burdened with debt, for the war had delayed his return, and the hospital had been carried on at his own expense. It was two years before he was well again. He at once

set about preparing by means of lectures and organ recitals to raise money to return to his work at Lamberene. Amongst many invitations from many lands came the request that he would deliver the Dale Lectures at Mansfield College, Oxford. This he did in the spring of 1922. In these lectures, shortly to be published under the title of *The Philosophy of Civilization*, he expounds his philosophy of life. "A Zinzendorf in the garb of a philosopher" he has been called. There may be truth in this, but it will be better to read the lectures than to be contented with an epigram. It was during his visit to Oxford that Dr. Schweitzer found time to visit Selly Oak to deliver the lectures which form this book. They were given in German and translated sentence by sentence. The revised German manuscript has been re-translated with great patience and care by Mrs. Powers of Kingsmead, to whom our thanks are due.

During his brief visit Dr. Schweitzer gave one organ recital in Birmingham, about which a prominent critic wrote to the effect that his playing of Bach was not merely a display of brilliant technique but an act of worship and a sacrament. Perhaps the following passages from *Johann Sebastian Bach* have a certain interesting or sug-

gestive applicability *mutatis mutandis* to the organist of the Paris Bach Society, the missionary doctor, the prophet of the "Interimsethik," and may help to show why in Bach Dr. Schweitzer finds a kindred spirit:—

"In the last resort the whole man is for the most part an enigma, for to our eyes the outer man differs so much from the inner that neither seems to have any part in the other. In the case of Bach, more than in that of any other genius, the man as he looked and behaved was only the opaque envelope designed to lodge the artistic soul within. In Beethoven, the inner man seizes upon the outer man, uproots him from his normal life, agitates him and informs him, until the inner light pierces through him and finally consumes him. Not so with Bach. His is rather a case of dualism: his artistic vicissitudes and creations go on side by side with the normal and almost commonplace tenor of his workaday existence, without mixing with or making any impression on this. Bach fought for his everyday life, but not for the recognition of his art and of his works. In this respect he is very different from Beethoven and Wagner, and in general from what we understand by an 'artist.'"

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And again: "In the last resort, however, Bach's real religion was not orthodox Lutheranism, but mysticism. In his innermost consciousness he belongs to the history of German mysticism. This robust man, who seems to be in the thick of life with his family and his work, and whose mouth seems to express something like a comfortable joy in life, was inwardly dead to the world. His whole thought was transfigured by a wonderfully serene longing for death. Again and again, whenever the text affords the least pretext for it, he gave voice to this longing in his music; and nowhere is his speech so moving as in the cantatas in which he discourses on the release from the body of this death. The 'Epiphany' and certain bass cantatas are the revelation of his most intimate religious feelings." Bach is praised as the most "objective" of musicians, and perhaps these quotations throw light upon the spiritual make-up of the fiery apocalyptist and the patient practical doctor.

It had been Dr. Schweitzer's hope shortly after his visit to England to return to Lamberene, but for a year that purpose has been delayed owing to the serious illness of his wife. It is probable that when this book is published, he will be on his lonely journey back to Central Africa,

for his wife and little daughter will be unable to go back with him. There will be many who follow him with affectionate thoughts and prayers. Dr. Schweitzer insists that I shall sign this preface and give my address that all to whom this book comes may have the means, should they wish it, through Dr. Schweitzer of ministering to the sore needs of Africa in the name of Christ. The natural conclusion of this brief notice is in the words about Christ that close *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* :—

"He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside, He came to those men who knew him not. He speaks to us the same word: 'Follow thou me!' and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings, which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is."

NATHANIEL MICKLEM.

Selly Oak Colleges,
Birmingham.

Christianity and the Religions of the World

You and I are concerned with preaching the Gospel of Jesus in the world. We need to have a clear conception of the reasons why this gospel is for us the highest wisdom. Why do we consider it to be the leaven which is to leaven the thought, the will and the hope of all mankind ?

In this our time there is special need for clear thinking on this question, for the religious mind as such is the object of much serious investigation, and the non-Christian religions of the past as well as the world-religions of the present day are being studied in an objective way. Formerly the non-Christian religions were simply called heathenism, and that disposed of them. To-day we have it pointed out to us how much earnest seeking after God and how many sublime thoughts are to be found in those religions. Often, indeed,

it is maintained that the philosophy of some of these world-religions is much more consistently thought out than the Christian philosophy, about which (so we are told) there is always something naïve. Several of these world-religions, notably Buddhism and Hinduism, are beginning to claim to be superior to Christianity. Their representatives come to the West and are admired as the bringers of truths which Christianity (so it is said) is not able to offer in the same way.

Let us together try to find out whether Christianity, simple though it is, can really maintain its claim to be the deepest expression of the religious mind

Do not expect me to furnish an apologetic of the type that is, unfortunately, so frequently met with —an apologetic which consists in the assertion that Christianity contains truths which are above all reasoning, and which, therefore, do not have to enter into contest with philosophy. This appears to me like a retiring into a mountain fortress, which is excellent indeed for defence, but useless as far as exercise of power over the surrounding country is concerned.

From my youth I have held the conviction that all religious truth must in the end be capable of being grasped as something that stands to reason.

I, therefore, believe that Christianity, in the contest with philosophy and with other religions, should not ask for exceptional treatment, but should be in the thick of the battle of ideas, relying solely on the power of its own inherent truth.

In the first place I have to touch upon the results obtained by those who have carried on research work in the sphere of history of religions as to the past of Christianity. You know that some have gone so far as to cast doubt upon its originality. The first to do this was Bruno Bauer (1809–82).[1] He maintains that the ideas of Christianity originated in the piety of the Græco-Roman world at the beginning of our era : first, some pious people, who longed for "redemption," formed a congregation ; then a tradition arose which made a Jewish rabbi, called Jesus, the preacher of this "religion of redemption."

Arthur Drews, at present professor of philosophy at the School of Technology in Karlsruhe, a deeply religious thinker, influenced by the philosopher Eduard von Hartmann, considers Christianity to

[1] He gives a summary of his ideas in his book entitled *Christus und die Cäsaren. Der Ursprung des Christentums aus dem römischen Griechentum*, 1877.

be the offspring of a myth about a dying and rising Saviour-god.[1] Out of this myth (so Drews declares) grew the history of Jesus as we now read it in the Gospels.

Others, again, assume that there really was a Jewish teacher called Jesus, who was crucified on account of his teaching, but that Paul was the real author of Christianity. Paul's mind, they say, was filled with the Hellenistic ideas of "redemption"; in Tarsus he had become familiar with the mystery-cults which were at that time practised in Asia Minor, and he was equally acquainted with mystical ideas of redemption which had grown in the soil of Zarathushtra's religion. Later on he connected these Græco-Oriental redemption-ideas with reflections concerning the person and the work of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth, whom he represented to be the Saviour dying for the redemption of men. Also, it was Paul who gave Christianity its sacramental character. The chief represen-

[1] Arthur Drews, *Die Christusmythe*, 1909.—Of the numerous modern writers who dispute the historicity of Jesus, I will mention the following: John M. Robertson, *Christianity and Mythology*, 1900; William Benjamin Smith, *Ecce Deus*, 1912; Samuel Sublinski, *Die Entstehung des Christentums aus der antiken Kultur*, 1910—*vide* Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 3rd edition, 1921.

tative of this view is the German philologist Richard Reitzenstein.[1]

How can men who think seriously come to the conclusion that the ideas of Christianity do not go back to Jesus, but merely represent a transformation of ideas which stirred religious circles in the then heathen world ?

As a matter of fact, there is a certain analogy between Christianity and Hellenistic piety. In both, the assurance of redemption plays a part ; in both, the attainment of redemption is thought of as being connected with sacramental rites.

In the beginning of our era the longing for redemption sought satisfaction in cults which had originated in Greece or in the Orient or in Egypt, and which claimed the power to mediate redemption to men through mysterious initiations. These cults have only recently become the object of historical research, and their significance for the spiritual life of the period when the ancient world was passing away has been recognized. (Pioneers in this sphere were the German philologists, Herman Usener, Erwin Rohde, and Albrecht Dieterich,

[1] Richard Reitzenstein, *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen, Grundgedanken und Wirkungen*, 1910 ; and *Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, 1921. Concerning this theory *vide* Albert Schweitzer, *Paul and his Interpreters*, 1912.

and the Belgian scholar, Franz Cumont).[1] Greece contributed the Eleusinian Mysteries, Asia Minor the worship of Attis and of Cybele, Egypt the cult of Isis and Serapis, Persia the cult of Mithras.

The attempt to prove that Christianity is derived from these mystery-religions of redemption does not lead to positive results. Christianity is much richer than they, for it comprises elements of a very different type. However much one may idealize the Græco-Oriental mystery-religions—and some of the investigators have idealized them beyond measure—they are still poverty-stricken, compared with Christianity. If one forms an unbiased judgment, on the basis of the extant records concerning them, a great deal of the charm with which they are being surrounded to-day vanishes. They are concerned solely with the bestowal of immortality upon men through magic. The ethical element, which plays such a predominant part in Christianity, they contain in words, at best, but not in reality. The Mithras-cult alone is really ethical. It derives its ethical energies from the religion of Zarathushtra, of which it is a fragment

[1] Hermann Usener, *Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, 1889 and 1899; Erwin Rohde, *Psyche*, 1894; Albrecht Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, 1903; Franz Cumont, *Les Mystères de Mithra*, 1899; *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain*, 1906.

that for some time whirled, like a flaming comet, in the Græco-Oriental and Græco-Roman world. But not even the wildest fanatic disputing the originality of Christianity can think of maintaining that it sprang from the cult of Mithras, for that cult appeared in the Græco-Oriental world only after Christianity had attained to full development. It was, however, the very vitality of its ethical ideas that made the Mithras-religion, which Roman soldiers brought into Western Europe and Africa, the most powerful rival of Christianity.

A fundamental difference between the redemption-idea found in the cults of the Hellenistic period and that of Christianity lies in this : the one knows nothing of the conception of the Kingdom of God, whereas the other is dominated by that conception.

Hellenistic religion is exclusively concerned with the destiny of spirit in the world of matter. It seeks to understand how the life from above came down into the lower life, and how it can be released from this captivity. Its interest centres in this restoration of the spiritual element to its original sphere, and not in the fate of mankind or of the world. Christianity, on the other hand, lives by the glowing hope of a better world. Redemption, according to the Christian conception, is the action of God, who brings this better world, the Kingdom

of God, into existence and receives into it those men who have proved themselves to be of an honest and good heart.

The teaching of Jesus and of Paul concerning the Kingdom of God is, briefly, as follows: The end of this world and the dawn of the supernatural world are regarded as near at hand. The "Saints," not being conformed to this world, have thereby proved their election to God's Kingdom, and they will live in that Kingdom together with the Messiah, in transfigured bodies, until the end comes and all things return unto God, so that God may be all in all, as in the beginning (1 Cor. xv., 28).

Of such an eschatological hope—that is, an expectation of the end of the world, and of its transfiguration—nothing is to be found in the Græco-Oriental mystery-religions. Where there is any kind of expectation of the end of the world, and of the Kingdom of God, we certainly have to do with a type of religious thinking which cannot be traced back to those mystery-religions, but which is derived from that Jewish outlook we find in the prophets. Amos and Isaiah have created the conception of the Kingdom of God. Late Judaism developed it in fantastic ways, no doubt partly under the influence of ideas from Zarathushtra's religion, with which the exile made the Jews

acquainted. Jesus brings the Kingdom-idea to its ethical perfection, without inveighing against its late-Jewish form.

From every point of view, therefore, the contention that Christianity can be explained by being traced back to Græco-Oriental religious thought, has to be regarded as phantasy introduced into the sphere of the comparative study of religions. Christianity is the creation of Jesus, whose spiritual background was late-Jewish piety.

Later, when Christianity had to relinquish the hope for the speedy coming of the end of the world and for the immediate realization of the Kingdom of God, and when, through Greek converts, Greek thought came to influence it, it entered, to a certain degree, the world of the Græco-Oriental mystery-religions and was thereby impoverished.

As yet we know few details concerning the process by which Christianity, in an irrepressible development, casts off Jewish thought and is hellenized. This much, however, is certain: as the Jewish outlook is abandoned, the ideas which constitute the uniqueness and greatness of the teaching of Jesus—the ideas of the Kingdom of God and of an ethic directed towards that Kingdom —lose their vitality in the Christian religion. The first representative of that hellenized Christianity

was Ignatius, who lived in the latter part of the first and the beginning of the second centuries. In his letters there is not much of the vital teaching of Jesus to be found. He is chiefly interested in the sacraments and in the manner in which they become efficacious. He refers to the Lord's Supper as the "medicine of immortality."

Let us not be satisfied with having ascertained that Christianity cannot be traced to the religious mind of the Græco-Oriental type, but is something original and goes back to the personality of Jesus, who worked in Galilee and died at Jerusalem. In determining what is the difference between Christianity and the Græco-Oriental religion, let us try to discover what Christianity essentially is.

What again and again misleads people into the belief that the religious mind of the Græco-Oriental type and that of the Christian type are identical is the fact that both are pessimistic. They despair of the natural world. Just here, however, a most important difference is revealed. Græco-Oriental piety is merely pessimistic. The only question with which it concerns itself is how the spiritual element is set free from the world of matter. The Gnostics of the second century—Basilides, Valentinus, Marcion and the rest—have reinterpreted

Christianity on the lines of that pessimism and have tried to fit it into their impressive systems of doctrines concerning the descent of the spiritual into matter and its return to its origin. Manichæism, which arose in the third century, is dominated by the same thought.

Christianity, however, is not so consistent. In the bedrock of its pessimism there are optimistic veins, for it is not only the religion of redemption but of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, it wishes and hopes for a transformation of the world.

Connected with this is the fact that its ethic is quite different from that of the Græco-Oriental religions. The latter is concerned with liberation from the world only; it is not a dynamic ethic. Jesus, on the contrary, like the prophets and like Zarathushtra, who has much in common with the prophets, demands that we should become free from the world, and at the same time that we should be active in the world. The only experience the religious mind of the Græco-Oriental type knows is the longing after the spiritual; but according to the teaching of Jesus men are to be gripped by God's will of love, and must help to carry out that will in this world, in small things as in great things, in saving as in pardoning. In this imperfect world already to be glad instruments of

God's love is the service to which men are called, and it forms a preparatory stage to the bliss that awaits them in the perfected world, the Kingdom of God.

In doing God's will of love they experience communion with the Messiah, without being conscious of it. On that basis they will, on the Day of Judgment, enter into the Kingdom of God by the Messiah's decree. That is the meaning of that weighty word of Jesus (Matt. xxv., 40): "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Græco-Oriental piety, Plato, the mystery-religions and the Gnostics, all alike say to man: "Free thyself from the world!" Jesus says: "Get free from the world, in order to work in this world in the spirit and in the love of God, till God transplants you into another, more perfect world."

Wherein does the difference lie? In the Græco-Oriental religion there is no living conception of God. To it God is nothing but pure spirituality. The God of Jesus is an active God, who works in man. Therefore, the religion of Jesus is not consistent pessimism, completely systematized, but it is a chaotic mixture of pessimism and optimism.

Thus, the religious philosophy of Jesus is not unified. His judgment of the natural world, it

is true, is pessimistic; but to him God is other than the sum-total of the forces at work in the world, other than a pure spirituality, of which part was lost into the world and has to be restored. He is a dynamic Power for good, a mysterious Will, distinct from the world and superior to the world. To Him we yield our will; to Him we leave the future of the world. In the contrast between the world and God, who is an ethical Personality, and in the peculiar tension between pessimism and optimism lies the uniqueness of the religion of Jesus. The fact that it is not a unified system constitutes its greatness, its truth, its depth, its strength.

At this point I must observe that we modern men are inclined to interpret the thoughts of Jesus in a modern way. We are familiar with the idea that by the active ethical conduct of individuals the Kingdom of God may be realized on earth. Finding that Jesus speaks of ethical activity and also of the Kingdom of God, we think that he, too, connected the two in the way which seems so natural to us. In reality, however, Jesus does not speak of the Kingdom of God as of something that comes into existence in this world and through a development of human society, but as of something which is brought about by God when He trans-

forms this imperfect world into a perfect one. In the thought of Jesus, the ethical activity of man is only like a powerful prayer to God, that He may cause the Kingdom to appear without delay. In this sense we have to take the word of Jesus (Matt. xi., 12) that from the days of John the Baptist the Kingdom of God has been suffering violence, and the violent have been seizing it by force.

For about a century and a half the modernizing interpretation of the ideas of Jesus has ruled in Protestant theology as a matter of course. Only quite recently have we ventured to admit that he, living in the late-Jewish expectation of the end of the world, holds views of the Kingdom which differ from ours.

There is a deep significance in the fact that Jesus does not establish the organic connection, which to us seems so natural, between the ethical acts of men and the realization of the Kingdom of God. It signifies that we are to be ethical, not in the expectation of thereby fulfilling some purpose but from inward necessity, so as to be children of God's spirit and in this world already to enter into His will.

Jesus does not build up his ethic with a view to solving the problem of how to organize a perfectly ethical society, but he preaches the ethic of men

who together strive to attain to a perfect yielding of themselves to the will of God. Because he thus turns away from the utilitarian, he attains to the absolute ethic. An ethic which is formulated on a principle of utility is always relative.

An illustration: Jesus tells us that we must always forgive, that we must never fight for our rights nor resist evil; he does not consider whether observance of these commandments makes legally ordered conditions possible in human society, but he leads us beyond all considerations of utility into the inward constraint to do the will of God.

As modern men we imagine the state of the perfect human society to be one of harmony between legal organization and the practice of love. Jesus does not attempt to harmonize justice and love but says to man: If you want to be in the spirit of God, you may not think or act otherwise than in love.

It is because Jesus does not think in a utilitarian way, but only according to the absolute ethic of "not being conformed to the world," that there is such a remarkable contrast between his thoughts and our modern views. Only when we experience this contrast, have we entered into relationship to the true Jesus. Therefore, we must not allow

ourselves to be tempted into modernizing his views and inadvertently putting thoughts as we think them into his words. His significance for us is that he fights against the spirit of the modern world, forcing it to abandon the low level on which it moves even in its best thoughts and to rise to the height whence we judge things according to the superior will of God, which is active in us, and think no more in terms of human utilitarianism but solely in terms of having to do God's will —becoming forces of God's ethical personality.

Having thus ascertained that Christianity is something original, and, in comparing it with the Græco-Oriental religions, having seen something of its peculiar character, we now proceed to set it over against the world-religions which to-day strive for spiritual supremacy.

Which are they ? Brahmanism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and that type of religious thinking which goes back to the Chinese philosophers, Lao Tsz and Confucius (Kung Tsz).

There would seem to be no object in comparing Christianity with the religion of Zarathushtra, which in many respects shows the greatest affinity with the Jewish religion and with Christianity itself ; for Zoroastrianism has ceased to play a

part in this world and can hardly be expected ever to play one again. This religion goes back to Zarathushtra (Zoroaster), a great prophetic personality, who probably lived in the seventh century B.C. in northern Persia. We have no detailed records about its beginning.

The fundamental idea of this religion is that the world is under the sway of Angromainyu (Ahriman), the lord of the evil spirits. His opponent is Ahura-Mazda (Ormuzd), the chief of the good spirits, the preserver of life and the one who demands purity. His the world will be one day, and by him it will be transformed into a more perfect world. Men have to decide whether in the battle which is in progress they will stand on the side of Ahura-Mazda or on that of Angromainyu.

The religion of Zarathushtra—in honour of Ahura-Mazda it is also called Mazdaism—was at its zenith in the empire founded by the Sassanides (A.D. 226–642). When the Mohammedan Arabs destroyed that empire, which had already been weakened by its wars with Byzantium, the fate of Zoroastrianism was sealed. It was gradually extirpated, its followers being forced, in the course of the centuries, to embrace Islam. In A.D. 1697 the last remaining adherents fled to India and settled north of Bombay, where their descendants

live to this day. To them we are indebted, through the New-Persian translation, for our knowledge of what has been preserved of the Avesta, the collection of the sacred books of Zoroastrianism. Anquatil Duperron, the French scholar, brought the Avesta from India to Europe in 1761.

There is also no need for a comparison of spiritual values as between Christianity and Islam. The latter arose in the seventh century A.D., partly under the influence of Jewish and Christian ideas. It lacks spiritual originality and is not a religion with profound thoughts on God and the world. Its power in the world is based on the fact that, while it is a monotheistic and also to some extent an ethical religion, it has preserved all the instincts of the primitive religious mind and is thus able to offer itself to the uncivilized and the half-civilized peoples of Asia and Africa as the form of monotheism most easily accessible to them. There are, it is true, some deeper, mystic elements in Islam fighting for existence, especially in the so-called Sufism, a movement which is dominated by Zoroastrian and Indian influences. Such movements are, however, being suppressed again and again.

A comparison between the religion of Israel and Christianity is unnecessary, because the latter has

taken over the most vital ideas of the former and has developed them.

How, then, does Christianity fare, set over against Brahmanism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and the Chinese religion, in all of which we find profound and unique ideas about God and the world ?

Let us get at a guiding principle for our discussion. We cannot attempt more than a comparison of the characteristic fundamental ideas of the various types of religion. We shall measure the world-religions as to the ideals they stand for. How much each of them in reality falls short of its ideal will not be considered. Christianity itself, as it appears in history, lags far behind its ideal and must strive to get nearer to it than it has done so far.

When examining the fundamental ideas of the higher religions, we notice three lines of distinction which are determinative for the character of each religion. The first is that between optimistic and pessimistic ; the second that between monistic and dualistic ; thirdly, there is the greater or lesser extent to which ethical motives are present.

A religion is optimistic if it represents the conviction that the forces at work in the natural world have their origin in a perfect primal force,

which leads all things towards perfection through a natural development.

The religious mind is said to hold a pessimistic view, if it cannot conceive the forces at work in the world of sense as the expression of divine goodness and perfection. It, therefore, does not rest its hopes on possibilities of development within this physical world, but looks beyond into the world of pure, spiritual being.

A religion is monistic if it considers God to be the sum-total of all the forces at work in the universe, and, therefore, believes that in the knowledge of the universe we can attain to perfect knowledge of God. Thus, in its very nature, monism is pantheistic.

A religion is dualistic if it does not make any attempt to arrive at a full knowledge of the nature of God by examining the forces which are active in the natural world, but seeks to realize Him in accordance with the ideal conceptions of Him that we carry within us. Of necessity this leads to the idea that this God stands to a certain extent in contrast with the forces of Nature, however great may be the difficulties which this involves for human reasoning. The God whom we have within us as an ideal is an ethical Personality; on the other hand, the happenings due to the forces at work in

the universe bear no ethical character. Thus, the dualistic religion is theistic.

The distinctions we have so far touched upon concern more the philosophical conceptions on which a religion may be based. It is the ethical content, however, that determines its inner nature. The great question, therefore, which each religion must be asked is, how far it produces permanent and profound incentives to the inward perfecting of personality and to ethical activity.

In religion we try to find an answer to the elementary question with which each one of us is newly confronted every morning, namely, what meaning and what value is to be ascribed to our life. What am I in the world? What is my purpose in it. What may I hope for in this world? I do not want to consider my existence merely as one which rises and perishes among the billions of billions of beings which constitute the universe, but as a life which has a value, if I comprehend it and live it according to true knowledge.

All questions of religion tend towards the one which comprises them all: How can I conceive of myself as being in the world and at the same time in God? All the questions of Christian theology, too, in all the centuries, go back to this one. What

answers to it do we find in the various world-religions?

Let us first consult Brahmanism and Buddhism. Both are monistic and pessimistic. Buddhism is only a specific expression of the Brahmanistic thinking.

The original religion of India was polytheism. The hymns of the Veda, the most ancient sacred book of the Indians, are addressed to the Indian gods. Among the priests who ministered to these gods there originated, at a later period, a more profound way of thinking, which led beyond polytheism. How exactly it arose has not yet been fully explained. Its beginnings are probably to be found in the desire of the priests to gain mysterious power over the gods themselves by acquiring knowledge of the true nature of things and by attaining to inward liberation from the world.

The beginnings of Brahmanistic thought go back to about 1000 B.C. Its first manifestations we find in the Upanishads, which are, so to speak, intended to set forth the secret deeper meaning of the Vedic hymns. The culmination of Brahmanic thinking is represented in the Vedanta teaching, which is embodied in the Brahma-Sutras. Vedanta means

end of the Veda; sutra means a thread; the sutras are short key-sentences for the memorizing of the Brahmanic teaching.

The teaching of Brahmanism is as follows: The whole world, as I see it when looking round, and as I experience it, is nothing but an imperfect appearance of the pure Being, of which the essence is the Brahma, the world-soul. From this most universal, most pure Being all beings spring. Even the gods dwell in it, according to a Vedic hymn, "as the cows in a cow-shed." This explains how the Brahmanic teaching, in spite of having arrived at the knowledge of the one and unified Supreme Being, can allow polytheism to exist. It simply takes the gods to be the highest among the created beings.

The natural world is imperfect, because it is a round of coming into existence and perishing, of perishing and coming into existence. It is imperfect for this further reason, that one creature's will to live is in conflict with the will to live of another, and thus the one brings pain and suffering upon the other.

From this imperfect world of sorrow man frees himself by knowledge and by action coming out of that knowledge. Again and again he says to himself that all that he sees and all that

happens around him, is nothing but a confused play, from which nothing can be expected, and in which he does not have to take any part. His object, therefore, can only be to withdraw from the world of sense into the world of pure being. He is no more to cling to life nor to take any interest in this world. He must rise to a state in which he absolutely ceases from all activity and has no more sympathies. He is to have no more desire in this world nor to expect anything from it. To die to the world and to his own life is his spiritual calling. Entering more and more into the eternal pure being, he gives to his life its true meaning.

All natural existence is continued in the cycle of transmigration. By the mystic act of "knowing," by which the will to live dies like a flame that finds no more fuel, a soul can be delivered from the cycle of transmigration.

By means of meditation man must try to arrive at that state of abstraction from the world which already approximates to the state of absolute being. The Upanishads contain detailed instructions concerning posture, direction of looks and breath-control, to be followed in one's efforts to reach that state of unconsciousness.

Asceticism and self-torture are to be aids towards destroying the will to live. At a certain age, the

Brahman has to retire into the forest as a hermit and has to complete the process of dying to the world by putting an end to his existence in a voluntary death.

Buddhism is based on the same fundamental ideas as Brahmanism. It differs on the following points: In the first place, it is much more indifferent, in principle, to the polytheistic cult than is Brahmanism. Further, it deprecates the learned investigations and discussions concerning the nature of existence. It contents itself with knowing that all that happens within the cycle of coming into existence and perishing is suffering, and that the one thing of importance is to pass outside this cycle and to enter the passionless state, the Nirvana.

Unlike Brahmanism, too, Buddhism rejects all asceticism, all self-torture and the voluntary parting with life. Buddha says: "The essential thing is that I emancipate myself from the world in thought. If I do that, mortification of the body is no longer necessary. I may live in tranquil serenity, as one who knows that he does not really live any more but has already entered into Peace."

Buddha's denial of life and of the world is clarified; therefore he has more natural and more human feelings than have the Brahmans. That is

also revealed in the fact that he is much more concerned than they are with the compassion which we ought to show to all suffering creatures.

Buddha, as you know, lived in the second half of the sixth and in the early part of the fifth centuries B.C., about 557-477. Born into a prince's family, he fled from his palace, forsaking his wife and child, in order to attain assurance of redemption by asceticism and self-torture. He was, however, not granted the longed-for enlightenment until he again partook of food and drink and ceased to torture his body. That is the reason why he preached redemption as being obtainable through knowledge only, without asceticism and self-torture.

Buddha did not intend to establish a new religion, but only a monastic order, in which redemption was to be realized apart from the Brahmanic extravagances. Later on, however, Buddha's teaching came to be regarded as a religion. For centuries it had many followers in India. Gradually it was dispossessed, especially by Hinduism; only in Ceylon and in Nepal (a district on the southern slope of the Himalayas) did it survive. On the other hand, it succeeded in spreading in China from the first century A.D., and in Tibet from the seventh century A.D., also in Japan, Manchuria, Mongolia,

Burma and the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago. It must be said, however, that in the Buddhism which has become a world-religion there is not much left of the original. It has been amalgamated with unthinking polytheism and has lost the greatness and uniqueness of its ideas.

How, then, does the Gospel of Jesus compare with Brahmanism and Buddhism? When meeting them, it becomes first of all conscious of its own simplicity. Brahmanism and Buddhism believe that they have lifted the curtain and found the solution of the riddles of the world and of human life. This arrogance of those who "know" we find in Indian literature. Those who work in India find it in the men with whom they have to do. It is an important feature in the character of the Indian religion. Jesus does not lead us into such presumption, but into humility. He wakens in us a longing to get a glimpse of the mystery of the Kingdom of God. In 1 Cor. xiii. the apostle Paul uses powerful words to express the thought that at best "we know in part."

The few points of contact between Christianity and this Indian religion with its negation of life and of the world have been so over-emphasized by some that they came to believe Christianity had

its origin in thought-movements which had come from India. One of the first and greatest thinkers who stood for that theory was the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860). In his book entitled *The World as Will and Idea* he declares the Indian religion to be superior to Christianity, the former being the result of logical thinking about the universe.

Since then it has been maintained again and again, especially by Theosophy, that the Indian religion and Christianity are essentially the same. Again and again the idea crops up that at the time of Jesus Indian esoteric doctrines were known in Palestine. Through the Jewish writer Josephus (first century A.D.) we know of a Jewish sect, the Essenes, who had a settlement near the Dead Sea. Although there is no kind of proof available, the assertion is made that this sect was acquainted with Indian wisdom, and further—there are no records concerning this either—that Jesus was in touch with this sect and was by them initiated into those Indian doctrines, which he subsequently preached as the gospel of love, having clothed them in a Jewish garb. Some Theosophist biographies of Jesus go so far as to say that the boy Jesus lived in a Buddhist monastery. A certain Nicolas Natowitch gave out that he had found documents on the

subject in a Buddhist monastery in Tibet, and he published what he falsely declared to be an extract from such documents, in a book entitled *La Vie inconnue de Jésus-Christ.*[1]

Those are phantasies. Jesus was neither influenced by the Brahmans nor by Buddha. In saying this I do not mean to assert that the Near East at that period could not have been acquainted with Indian thought. It is difficult to find out how much intercourse there was between the different countries in Jesus' time. We are always inclined to think that travelling became possible through steamships and railways only. It is, however, probable that at the beginning of our era people travelled more extensively than we often suppose. Moreover, in those days travelling involved more spreading of ideas than it does to-day. The men who travelled in those times did not put up at international hotels but moved among the people. Going about in the world they were seekers and propagators of the truth.

There is a certain amount of evidence to show that in ancient times there was more exchange of ideas between India and the Near East than is generally believed. Plato, for example, must some-

[1] Paris, 1894. I have mentioned such fantastic biographies of Jesus in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus.*

how have been acquainted with Indian doctrines. Otherwise it cannot be explained how in his philosophy—as also in Greek esoteric doctrines attributed to Orpheus the singer—there appears the negation of life and of the world in connection with a doctrine about the transmigration of souls which is identical with that of India.

The decisive factor, however, is that there is no relation of content between the ideas of Jesus and those of the Brahmans and of Buddha.

As a matter of fact, the relation between Christianity and the Indian religions resembles the relation which exists between Christianity and the Græco-Oriental type of religion. In so far as Christianity, too, is pessimistic, but only so far, a certain degree of external relationship may be said to exist. In their inner nature the two differ absolutely. The Brahmans and Buddha say to man: "As one who has died, and to whom nothing in the natural world is of interest any longer, you should live in the world of pure spirituality." The gospel of Jesus tells him: "You must become free from the world and from yourself, in order to work in the world as an instrument of God."

The Indian idea of the divine is, that it is pure, spiritual essence. It is the ocean into which

man, tired of swimming, wishes to sink. The God of the Gospel of Jesus is living, ethical Will, desiring to give to my will a new direction. He says to me: "Strike out courageously! Do not ask where your efforts will take you on the infinite ocean. It is my will that you should swim."

Here we come to the fundamental difference. Brahmanism and Buddhism, really, attain to a ethic in words only, but not to an ethic of deed. These ultimate consequences to which Indian thinking leads must be exposed. We cannot allow this religion to represent itself as the higher form of the religion of love, basing its claim to such superiority on its origin in pure reasoning about the world. The battle between Brahmanism and Buddhism on the one side and Christianity on the other is a battle between the spiritual and the ethical. Again and again in discussions Indians will tell you this: "Spirituality is not morality—that is, to become spiritual by merging into the divine is something apart, something which ultimately, being supreme, is above all ethic." We Christians, on the other hand, say: "Spirituality and morality are one and the same. It is through the most thorough-going morality that the highest spirituality is attained,

through the most thorough-going morality that it is continually expressed."

Indian religion likes to represent itself as the religion of universal sympathy. It talks a good deal about the compassion which we should feel for all creatures. At the same time, however, it preaches the ideal of being absolutely without interest and of ceasing from all activity, and maintains that even the enthusiasm for doing good must be considered as a passion which in the end has to be overcome. From intellectual compassion the Brahmanist and the Buddhist do not advance to the compassion of deed. Why, indeed, should they render material assistance to a creature in distress? The only help which they can give, without being inconsistent, is to enable the individual to look behind the veil, and to tell him that he must die to life and world and thus rise to the passionless state.

In the Indian mind intellectualism consumes the ethical element, just as sometimes a cloud which was to have given rain is consumed in a sultry atmosphere.

The Gospel of Jesus, on the contrary, knows nothing of a cold superiority with which to look upon things, but creates enthusiasm for activity within God's will of love. In its very

essence it aims at being the supreme ethical enthusiasm.

Theosophy, which endeavours to create a unified religion, and therefore tries to bring Indian and Christian piety together, has a difficult task, because the two are so totally different from each other in character. Usually it sacrifices Christian thought to Indian thought. It only uses the former to give a stronger ethical colouring to the latter.

One more point, which reveals a significant difference—the Brahmans' and Buddha's doctrine of redemption is for priests and monks only, for they alone are in a position to live out this religion of withdrawing from the world. This fact is usually passed over in silence by propagandists of Indian religion. How often have I had to point out to thinking men that Brahmanism and Buddhism are not religions for ordinary men, but solely for monks. At the conclusion of Buddha's most profound discourses we generally find some word which reminds us of the fact that here is not a man speaking to men, but an Indian monk speaking to Indian monks. And the charm is gone.

Brahmanism and Buddhism have nothing to offer to any but those whose circumstances enable

them to withdraw from the world and to devote their lives to self-perfection beyond the sphere of deeds. To the man who ploughs the field or works in a factory, they can say nothing but that he has not yet arrived at the true knowledge, otherwise he would cease from an activity which binds him to the deceitful and sorrowful world of sense. The only consolation they can offer him is the prospect of his getting a chance, in some future incarnation, to rise to the higher knowledge and to seek the way which leads out of this world.

The Gospel of Jesus, on the other hand, deals with man as such, and teaches him how, though living and working in this world, he should be inwardly free from it. Paul, speaking as a man mighty in the spirit, says in that wonderful word in 1 Cor. vii. that we should "weep as though we wept not, rejoice as though we rejoiced not, and buy as though we possessed not." In the striving after spiritual liberty from the world lies the solution of the problem. To obtain freedom from the world in a spiritual sense is open to everyone. To obtain freedom in an outward sense will always be the privilege of the few who can afford to step outside the ordinary circumstances of life and to create exceptional

conditions for themselves. In so doing they will always depend on the help of those who live the natural life. What would become of the holy monks of Buddha, if they could not beg food of the men who continue to till the ground ?

One thing, however, we must acknowledge : the Indian religions train men to recollectedness. There is something besides arrogance in the attitude of their representatives towards us, the poor Westerners. They are aware of the peculiar weakness of the modern Christian piety. We are too much inclined to imagine that Christianity is merely activity. We do not have enough inwardness, we are not sufficiently preoccupied with our own spiritual life, we lack quietness ; and this not only because in our exacting, busy existence it is difficult to obtain, but because, ignoring its importance, we do not take pains to secure it, being too easily contented with living our lives as unrecollected men who merely aim at being good.

In fine, Brahmanism and Buddhism make an impression because they represent a type of religion that is unified in itself, being the result of consistent reasoning on the world and on life. They present a logical, monistic-pessimistic view of world and life. But it is a poverty-stricken

religion. Its God is mere empty spirituality. Its last word to man is absolute negation of life and of the world. Its ethical content is meagre. It is a mysticism which makes man lose his individual existence in a god that is dead.

When discussing religious matters with us, the Indian mind is to some extent conscious of this poverty. Again and again it tries to have a warmer light play upon its cold mysticism, so that it may shine in ethical colouring. But this is a vain effort. Claiming, and rightly, to be the result of logical reasoning, Indian religion may not assert anything that would not be consistent with its own ideas. As far as we have anything to do with it, we do not allow it to appear to be something different from what it really is, namely, a negation of life and of the world, purporting to be religion and ethics.

The redemption it preaches, a redemption to be realised through a merging into spirituality, has something grand about it. This idea, so complete in itself, attracts thoughtful men in an almost uncanny way. We, however, have a longing for another kind of union with God. We desire our union with God to result in living ethical spirituality, in activity in the power of God. Such a redemption from the world is the only kind of

redemption that can satisfy the longing of the heart. Thus, although we know the charm of the logical religion, we stand by Christianity with all its simplicity and all its antinomies. It is indeed true and valuable, for it answers to the deepest stirrings of our inner will to live.

Religion is more than negation of life and of the world.

Let us leave Hinduism on one side for the moment, and let us go across the Himalaya mountains into China. There we find the exact opposite to Brahmanist and Buddhist piety. If Indian religion is monistic-pessimistic, Chinese religious thinking is certainly monistic-optimistic.

All the leading religious thinkers of China are at one in holding the conviction that the forces which are at work in the world are good. Therefore, in their opinion, true piety consists in understanding the meaning of the world and in acting in accordance with it. Being consistent monistic thinkers, they, like the Brahmans and Buddha, do not attain to the conception of a personal God ; but whereas for the Indians God remains absolute, lifeless spirituality, he is to the Chinese the mere sum-total of the forces at work in the world. This Power, which they conceive as being

above all things and in all things, they call "Heaven."

This religious philosophy of Nature does not need to enter into argument with the popular traditional religion, but allows it to exist as the form of popular worship in vogue. To adopt this attitude is not very difficult, because the popular cult is only an unpretentious worship of ancestors, heroes and spirits.

In its fully developed form we find this religious philosophy of Nature in the teaching of Lao Tsz (beginning of the sixth century B.C.). He has left only a small book known as the *Tao Te King*.[1] That means something like "A Treatise on the Life according to the Meaning of Existence." The book was given this title by the Emperor Hang Ging Di, who reigned from 156 to 140 B.C., and who was an admirer of Lao Tsz.

What does it mean to think and to live according to the meaning of existence and in harmony with Heaven? It means to become like the forces of Nature.

And which are the characteristics of the forces

[1] Translated into English by James Legge in *The Sacred Books of the East* (1891); into German by Victor von Strauss (1870), Richard Wilhelm and others (1911); into French by Stanislas Julien (1842).

of Nature? They work in unobtrusive, unselfish ways, not appearing to be busy outwardly, but solely in inward strength. That is why they accomplish such great things. We are to become forces of that type.

What Heaven demands of us is that we should be meek and peaceable and refrain from asserting ourselves. Heaven does not demand that we should be enthusiastic and for ever toiling in trying to do good; for nothing of the kind is to be seen in the working of the forces of Nature. A quietist mysticism illumined by a mild ethic, such is the religion to which Lao Tsz attains in his meditation on the world.

In sublime words he condemns war:—

> When opposing warriors join in battle,
> He who has pity conquers.
> Weapons are instruments of ill omen;
> They are not the instruments of the princely man,
> Who uses them only when he needs must.
> Peace and tranquillity are what he prizes.
> When he conquers, he is not elate.
> To be elate were to rejoice in the slaughter of human beings.
> Those who are victorious in battle
> Should be placed in the order of funeral rites.

Kung Tsz (Confucius, 560–480 B.C.), Meng Tsz (Mencius, 372–289 B.C.), and Meh Tsz (Mec-

cius, who probably lived in the second half of the fifth century B.C.) go farther than Lao Tsz.[1] They try to find much more active goodness in the doings of Heaven than he does. Unlike him, accordingly, they add active love to the ideal of piety. In many points these thinkers show affinity with the spirit of Jesus. He would have had appreciation for them, as for the scribe who had comprehended the great commandment, and to whom he said: "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

Meh-Tsz is the one who goes farthest. He demands unlimited love of man. We have a beautiful word of his:—

> We must do what Heaven desires us to do, and refrain from doing what Heaven does not desire us to do. What is it that Heaven desires, and what is that which Heaven hates? Heaven desires that men should love and be of use to one another, and does not wish them to rob one another. How do we know that? From the fact that Heaven loves all without exception, and ministers to the needs of all. And this is known from the fact that Heaven possesses and nourishes them all without exception.

At that time there were men in China who travelled all over the empire as preachers of love

[1] The writings of these Chinese thinkers, as far as they have come down to our time, have been translated into English by James Legge. An excellent German translation is being published by Dr. Richard Wilhelm.

and peace. It is there that we find the first pacificists, probably in the fifth century B.C. In a record which has come down to our time with the writings of the philosopher Chwang Tsz, this is said about them :—

> They sought to unite men through an ardent love in universal brotherhood. To fight against lusts and evil desires was their chief endeavour. When they were reviled, they did not consider it a shame ; they were intent on nothing but the redemption of men from quarrelling. They forbade aggression, and preached disarmament in order to redeem mankind from war. This teaching they carried throughout the world. They admonished princes and instructed subjects. The world was not ready to accept their teaching, but they held to it all the more firmly. It was said that high and low tried to avoid meeting them, but that they forced themselves upon people.

Before these Chinese religious thinkers, as before modern Christians, there hovered a vision of the Kingdom of God, expected to be realized on earth through love. Let us not minimize what we thus find of Christian ideals among non-Christians of remote centuries in a far-off country. To do so would not be in accordance with the spirit of Jesus. Let us rejoice in the Truth, wherever we find its lamp burning.

Yet, we must say, Chinese piety is built on sand. It is based on the assumption that in the working of the forces of Nature we may read all

that we believe and affirm in the religion of love, and that, therefore, meditation on the nature of the universe leads us to that religion. Thus, they attempt to pretend that the essence of the religion of love is knowledge of the world. It is an illusion. Knowledge of the world does not lead so far. Lao Tsz himself sees that clearly. He therefore preaches a colourless ethic, as the "conduct according to the meaning of the world," and he rejects all enthusiastic ethic of love. Those thinkers who, imitating him, keep to reality cannot help remaining within the boundaries he marked. The greatest among those thinkers is Chwang Tsz (fourth century B.C.). He violently opposes Kung Tsz, Meng Tsz and the other apostles of love, and shows them with unmerciful clearness of argument that the "life in accordance with the meaning of existence" does not require of man what they preach. Chwang Tsz, like Lao Tsz, becomes a quietist mystic. His philosophy of Nature, which is religious and yet strictly realistic, reminds us in many ways of the philosophy of the Stoics and of Spinoza.

The religious mind of China has not attracted as much attention in the West as that of India. It is only recently that we have begun to know a little more about it. Let me tell you that to

become acquainted with these thinkers was for me a vital experience; especially Lao Tsz and Meng Tsz fascinated me. They are much nearer to us than the Indian philosophers, for they do not move in an atmosphere of arrogant negation of life and world, but are battling with philosophy, therein to attain to really ethical piety. Chinese religion, unlike Brahmanism and Buddhism, bears not only an outward resemblance to the Gospel of Jesus, but, being moved by the great commandment of love, it has in many respects true spiritual affinity with the Gospel.

As regards one thing, however, the religion of China is as far removed from us as that of India: it attempts to be unified, self-contained, logical knowledge of the world. In so far as the Chinese philosophers are ethical, they idealize the natural forces at work in the world, and ascribe to them ethical character. In so far as they dare to face reality, they must turn the wick of the lamp of ethics down, till in the end it is reduced to a dimly burning light. Slaves of their monism, they run after an illusion—as if religion could justify itself on the basis of "knowledge of the world." If they cannot comprehend the meaning of the world as the activity of the forces of love,

they land in a cold religion, if not in scepticism. Thus, there are indeed some Chinese thinkers who say: "The meaning of the world is, that in the expectation of inevitable death we enjoy life." The best known of the philosophers of that type is Yang Tsz.

We, as Christians, have ceased to imagine that a living, ethical religion can be the logical outcome of "knowing the world." We are convinced that from the world we cannot gain our knowledge of God, who is an ethical Personality. Facing the terrible problem which the world presents, we strive hard not to despair of God. We dare to admit that the forces at work in Nature are in so many ways different from what we should expect them to be in a world which owes its origin to a perfect creative Will. We dare to admit that in Nature and in ourselves we find much that we feel to be evil. We are far more deeply conscious of what sin is, than are the religious minds of China; and much more deeply than they do, do we feel that God cannot be "known," but must be grasped by that faith which says: "Nevertheless, I am continually with thee."

To the Brahmans and to Buddha we said: Religion is more than a pessimism which denies life and world. To the religious minds of China

we say: Religion is more than ethical optimism. And to both types of thinkers, we say: Religion is not a knowledge of the divine which springs from the contemplation of the universe. God, we believe, is more than merely the spiritual force underlying this world. Monism and pantheism, however profound and spiritual, do not lead into the ultimate problem of religion. That problem is, that in ourselves we experience God as different from the God we find in Nature: in Nature we recognize Him only as impersonal creative Power, in ourselves we recognize Him as ethical Personality.

The mysterious contrast between God and the world, which we thus experience within ourselves, we take into our religion, as Jesus does in his Gospel. The unified logical religion of the Brahmans, of Buddha and of the Chinese philosophers we leave behind as *naïveté*. It does not answer to what we experience as reality outside and within ourselves.

Let us now return to India, and deal with Hinduism. It is with Hinduism that the missionaries in India have chiefly to do. And it is Hinduism which sets out to present itself to the world in general as a religion that is superior to Christianity.

What, then, is Hinduism really? In what relation does it stand to Brahmanism and Buddhism?

Hinduism is a popular religious movement, which rose alongside of the Brahmanic philosophy, yet more or less depending on it. Its beginnings lie probably as far back as the ninth century B.C. It originated in sects that attempted to carry the philosophic religion of the Brahmans into the religion of the lower castes, which up to that time had not been touched by it—and thus to open the way of redemption for the lower castes as well.

At the same time Hinduism represents a feeling after a religion that would be more vital and more satisfying to the heart than are Brahmanism and Buddhism. Unlike them, it does not seek to go side by side with the traditional polytheism, but tries to think itself into it and thereby to ennoble it.

Hinduism is, therefore, the popular religion of India. When Buddhism spread in India, Hinduism resisted it and in the end conquered it When the Mohammedan conquerors invaded India, about A.D. 1000 they tried, as they had done in Persia, by military force to establish their religion as the ruling one. But they did not succeed. The two religions have managed to

exist side by side and have influenced each other. It is well known that Akbar the Great, the Mohammedan ruler of Delhi (1542–1605), attempted to found a universal religion, combining Hinduism, Islam and the religion of Zarathushtra, using also some ideas from Christianity, with which he had become acquainted through Portuguese missionaries. This foundation of his, however, did not last.

Hinduism is a polytheism which carries within it the desire to become ethical monotheism but does not venture to take the decisive step. It does not dare to deprive polytheism of its power. Its method is to raise one of the chief gods, generally Vishnu (Krishna), in some way to the position of the universal God, who includes all the other deities in Himself. Thus, in discussions with monotheistic religions, Hinduism presents itself as monotheistic ; to the common people it appears as polytheism.

You ask : " How do the Hindus manage to hold monotheistic and polytheistic ideas at one and the same time ? " Remember, they are not so clumsy as we are. They say : " All the gods that are worshipped by the common people are merely forms in which the supreme God has appeared at one time or another. Therefore, the

worshippers of those gods worship in them the supreme and only God."

Such a relativist way of thinking is convenient, but it is dangerous. Monotheism is constantly in danger of being crushed by polytheism. It is like a man who is locked up in a cage with a lion. As a matter of fact, in Hinduism monotheism is constantly being dragged down by polytheism. What is more objectionable than anything else is the fact that Hinduism even allows itself to embrace quite immoral polytheistic cults.

We must, then, distinguish between the Hinduism of the thoughtful Hindus and that of the common people. We might say to the representatives of Hinduism: "You ought first of all to dispose of the idolatry which you drag along in your religion; then you may come and enter into discussion with us." Let us, however, leave that for the present. Let us take the idealized Hinduism, which to-day is already partly trimmed for Europe, to be the real Hinduism, and let us try to do justice to its religious ideas and to measure them with the measure of the highest spiritual and ethical religion.

Hinduism is a reaction against the stiffness and coldness of the Brahmanic religion. It will

not submit to the doctrine that God is merely the absolute, impersonal spiritual Being; it feels the need for imagining that the supreme spiritual Being is at the same time a personality. It tries to combine theism and pantheism. Accordingly, it has also a more living conception of the relation between God and the world than have the Brahmans and Buddha. It considers God not only as the ground of the world's existence but as a Being that loves the world. Consequently, the relation between God and man is conceived as a relation which is much more vital than that known in Brahmanism and Buddhism. Although Hinduism, too, takes religion ultimately to be a sinking into God and a dying in God, it tries at the same time to regard this merging into the Deity as loving surrender to Him.

The classical expression of these deeper and more vital movements within Hinduism we find in the famous Bhagavadgita (that is, Song of the Highest). The Bhagavadgita is a philosophical religious poem, which forms part of the great Indian epic called Mahabharata.[1] It relates how the god Krishna appears to the hero Arjuna and

[1] The Mahabharata describes the wars between two great royal houses. It was given the form in which it has come down to our time somewhere about the first century A.D., but the story itself is, no doubt, of much earlier date.

grants him a revelation. In this poem the supreme God speaks as follows about himself :—

I am the Self inwardly dwelling in all born beings ; the Beginning and the Midst and the End of born beings am I.

Of lights I am the radiant sun ; of the nightly luminaries the moon.

The source of the whole universe and its dissolution am I.

I am likewise power of immortality and death, Being and No-Being.

At the end of many births, the man of knowledge finds refuge in Me.

On Me set thy mind, in Me let thine understanding dwell ; so shalt thou assuredly abide afterward in Me.

Hear again My supreme word, deepest of all ; for that thou art exceedingly beloved of Me, therefore will I say what is for thy weal.

Have thy mind on Me, thy devotion toward Me, thy sacrifice to Me, do homage to Me. To Me shalt thou come. I make thee a truthful promise ; thou art dear to Me.

Surrendering all the Laws, come for refuge to Me alone. I will deliver thee from all sins ; grieve not.[1]

As Hinduism attempts to apprehend God as an ethical personality and religion as a loving surrender to Him, it sometimes uses language which really sounds Christian. As a matter of fact, it was through the influence of Christianity that it was moved to the endeavour to develop into an ethical religion, and it was thus influenced to a larger extent than it is ready to acknowledge.

[1] From Barnett's translation.

Since the sixteenth century it has been in contact with Christianity. It cannot be ignored that during the last hundred years some eminent thinkers have formulated those ideas within Hinduism which remind one of the religion of love, much more definitely than had ever been done before. Some have even aimed at an amalgamation of Hinduism and Christianity. Apart from the Gospel of Jesus, Hinduism would not be, in fact or in ideal, what it is to-day.

Moved by ethical ideas Hinduism also endeavours to become a religion of action. Not only does it preach, as do the Brahmans and Buddha, that man becomes perfect by withdrawing from the world, but it also tries to exhort him to the practice of love. As you know, Hinduism does no longer simply acquiesce, as did Brahmanism and Buddhism, in the great social evils in India, such as the unfortunate position of widows, but it is interested in actual life, and tries, though timidly, to bring about reforms.

What, then, is Hinduism, judged by the highest thoughts that stir within it? It is a reaction against the absolute, pessimistic negation of life and of the world, as found in the Brahmanist and Buddhist philosophy, and at the same time

it is an attempt to rise from dead monism and pantheism to the conception of a personal, living, ethical God. But in order to become a living, ethical religion, Hinduism gives up the consistency and self-containedness of the older schools of Indian religious thought. It concatenates thoughts in order to obtain valuable results. In every respect it is a religion of compromise. Polytheism and monotheism, pantheism and theism, intellectual mysticism and personal piety of heart, spiritual religion and popular cults—all these it tries to unite, without acknowledging the evident impossibility of their being thus united. It lives on imperfect conceptions and on half-truths. Therein lies its strength—its weakness too.

Hinduism is indeed incapable of becoming a definitely ethical religion, for that would mean a break with polytheism. Incapable for this further reason, that ultimately it is unable to replace the Brahmanic philosophy by any other. Wherever Hinduism ventures to think consistently, whether in its older or in its more modern representatives, it falls back into the Brahmanic way of thinking. There is little scope for moving away from it, and Hinduism tries in vain to hide the chain fastened to its foot.

That is revealed in the Bhagavadgita. We are

told how, just as Arjuna is about to give the sign for the battle to start, he begins to doubt whether he may legitimately kill men. Then the supreme God appears to him and has a long discourse with him, explaining that it is the spirit in which an action is performed, rather than what it is in itself, that must be regarded. If he, Arjuna, were to rush into the battle with unabashed delight in slaughter, he would do wrong. But if he realised that all happenings, fighting and killing included, were events which God caused to happen through us, his doubts would be dissolved. Wisdom consists in understanding that all that is, is in God, and that all that happens, happens in God. Krishna contends, therefore, that it behoves man to be conscious, in all his actions, of performing them in devotion to God, as events willed by Him ; in that case he, being in God, stands above good and evil. Therefore, if Arjuna considered that the death of his enemies had been decreed by God, and that he only carried out the purpose of God, he might mount his chariot in quietness of heart, and use spear and sword. Rejoicing over this solution, the hero gives the sign for the battle to begin.

A decision as to whether Hinduism is an ethical religion must be based on this famous passage.

Hinduism does not venture to think the idea of an ethical God resolutely. When it comes to the great problem how God can be conceived as the power at work in all the happenings in the world, and at the same time as the God of love, who requires us to act in love, and in love only—Hinduism falls from ethical religion back into the unethical, or, rather, it claims to be a religion beyond ethics. Instead of accepting the implications of ethical religion, it takes refuge in the hollow arguments of a sophistic pantheism.

Religion, I said, is the search for a solution of the problem how man can be in God and in the world at one and the same time. The answer given by Brahmanism and Buddhism is this: "By dying to the world and to life, for God is mere spirituality." Hinduism says: "By performing every action as something decreed by God, for God is the power which works all in all." In thus making God and the world coincide, Hinduism blurs the difference between good and evil, which it otherwise feels with elemental vividness. Why? Because it desires to be a religion which explains everything, a consistent religion which issues from logical thinking on the world.

Those among you who in India have to do with Hinduism are perhaps astonished to find that I

say so little about its compromising with superstition and with a low type of religion or about its other weak points, but that I have dealt in a one-sided way with the single question, how far it has the energy to strive to be really ethical. I do this of set purpose, for that is the one decisive question. It reveals the contrast not only between Christianity and Hinduism but between Christianity and all the Eastern religions which we have considered in these hours. The attitude of superiority with which the representatives of those religions meet us cannot be found surprising when we remember that those religions claim to have sprung from contemplation of the world, as indeed they have. All of them—Brahmanism, Buddhism, the religion of Lao Tsz and Chwang Tsz, as well as ancient and modern Hinduism—are religious philosophies of Nature, pessimistic or optimistic. Therein lies their strength and also the ever-increasing attraction which they have for us Westerners. They do indeed make us feel the high opinion they have of themselves, those logical religions! Those of you who work in India or in China know something about it; and in the men and the books coming to us from the East it is to be felt so strongly that it almost intimidates us.

As speculations about the world, those religions are unassailable. All religious philosophy of Nature, somehow, follows similar tracks, either towards pessimism or towards optimism. How closely do the Stoics, the Gnostics, Spinoza and the representatives of the speculative German philosophy in their ultimate ideas touch the religions of the East!

Religion, however, has not only to explain the world. It has also to respond to the need I feel of giving my life a purpose. The question on which ultimately the decisive judgment must be based is, whether a religion is truly and vitally ethical or not. When it comes to this final test, the logical religions of the East fail. They strive for an ethic. They stretch out towards it in thought; but in the end they sink back exhausted. The branch which they pulled down breaks in their hand and springs back, depriving them of the possibility to take hold of the fruit they had longed to pluck.

The passage from the Bhagavadgita to which I referred is rightly famous. It leads us into the very centre of the tragic fight in which the religions that boast their logic engage, in their attempt to attain to an ethic. That they ultimately take possession of it in words only, while

in reality they allow it to slip, is here revealed with terrible clearness.

Logical thought about the nature of the universe cannot reach an ethic. I have let you gain insight into the battles that are being fought within the religious philosophy of the East. You have noticed that the more it is logical and consistent, the less has it of an ethical content. Lao Tsz and Chwang Tsz are much greater thinkers than Kung Tsz (Confucius) and Meng Tsz, but their philosophy is accordingly less ethical.

At this bend of the road we meet the Eastern religions, and here we speak the decisive word. Their proud attitude can no longer intimidate us. We speak the decisive word, not as the defenders of a traditional religion but as religious thinkers who prove in convincing terms that their religion has depth, naïve though it may appear to be.

Every rational faith has to choose between two things: either to be an ethical religion or to be a religion that explains the world. We Christians choose the former, as that which is of higher value. We turn away from the logical, self-contained religion. To the question, how a man can be in the world and in God at one and the same time, we find this answer in the Gospel of Jesus: "By

living and working in this world as one who is not *of* the world."

Thus we no longer rely on the bridges formed by ordinary logical thought. Our path leads into the region of *naïveté* and of paradox. We tread it resolutely and with confidence. We hold to the absolutely and profoundly ethical religion as to the one thing needful, though philosophy may go to rack and ruin. That which appears to be *naïveté* in Christianity is in reality its profundity.

There are two kinds of *naïveté*: one which is not yet aware of all the problems and has not yet knocked at all the doors of knowledge; and another, a higher kind, which is the result of philosophy having looked into all problems, having sought counsel in all the spheres of knowledge, and then having come to see that we cannot explain anything but have to follow convictions whose inherent value appeals to us in an irresistible way.

Compared with the logical religions of the East, the Gospel of Jesus is illogical. It presupposes a God who is an ethical Personality, and who is, therefore, so to speak, outside the world. When trying to answer questions as to the relation

between this ethical Personality and the forces at work in the world, Christianity cannot rise above the mist. It must hold fast the belief that God is the sum-total of the forces working in the world —that all that is, is in God. So far, therefore, Christianity, too, is obliged to think on monistic and pantheistic lines. And yet it does not rest satisfied with conceiving God as the sum-total of the forces that are active in the world, for the God of monism and of pantheism—the God of Nature philosophies—is impersonal and has no ethical character. For this reason, Christianity accepts all the difficulties of the dualistic view; it is ethical theism and apprehends God as a Will that is distinct from the world and compels us not to conform to the world.

Again and again, in the course of the centuries, Christianity has sought to harmonize the philosophical and the ethical conceptions of God, but it has never succeeded. It carries within itself, unresolved, the antinomy between monism and dualism, between logical and ethical religion.

Neither can Christianity definitely choose between pessimism and optimism. It is pessimistic, not only because, like Brahmanism and Buddhism, it realizes that imperfection, pain, and sorrow are essential features of the natural world, but for

this additional and still more important reason, that in man it finds a will which does not answer to the will of the ethical God and which, therefore, is evil.

Again, Christianity is optimistic, because it does not abandon this world, does not, as do Brahmanism and Buddhism, withdraw from it in negation of life and of the world, but assigns to man a place in this world and commands him to live in it and to work in it in the spirit of the ethical God. Further, Christianity gives him the assurance that thereby God's purpose for the world and for man is being fulfilled ; it cannot, however, explain how. For what significance have the ethical character and the ethical activity of the religious individual in the infinite happenings of the universe ? What do they accomplish ? We must admit that the only answer we have to this question is, that thereby the will of God is fulfilled.

All problems of religion, ultimately, go back to this one—the experience I have of God within myself differs from the knowledge concerning Him which I derive from the world. In the world He appears to me as the mysterious, marvellous creative Force ; within me He reveals Himself as ethical Will. In the world He is

impersonal Force, within me He reveals Himself as Personality. The God who is known through philosophy and the God whom I experience as ethical Will do not coincide. They are one ; but how they are one, I do not understand.

Now, which is the more vital knowledge of God ? The knowledge derived from my experience of Him as ethical Will. The knowledge concerning God which is derived from Nature is always imperfect and inadequate, because we perceive the things in the world from without only. I see the tree grow, and I see it cover itself with leaves and blossoms ; but I do not understand the forces which effect this ; their generative power remains a mystery to me. In myself, on the other hand, I know things from within. The creative force which produces and sustains all that is, reveals itself in me in a way in which I do not get to know it elsewhere, namely, as ethical Will, as something which desires to be creative within me. This mystery, which I have experienced, is the decisive factor in my thinking, my willing and my understanding. All the mysteries of the world and of my existence in the world may ultimately be left on one side unsolved and insoluble. My life is completely and unmistakably determined by the mysterious experience of God revealing Him-

self within me as ethical Will and desiring to take hold of my life.

Let me express it in a simile. There is an ocean—cold water without motion. In this ocean, however, is the Gulf Stream, hot water, flowing from the Equator towards the Pole. Inquire of all scientists how it is physically imaginable that a stream of hot water flows between the waters of the ocean, which, so to speak, form its banks, the moving within the motionless, the hot within the cold: no scientist can explain it. Similarly, there is the God of love within the God of the forces of the universe—one with Him, and yet so totally different. We let ourselves be seized and carried away by that vital stream.

It is true that Christianity, too, has always sought to explain as much as possible. The first Christians expected the solution of the problem to lie in a speedy transformation of this natural world into the perfect world of the Kingdom of God. With ardent longing they looked forward to seeing God and the world harmonized with each other in that way, and to a life in the world perfectly congruous with existence in God. Their hope was not fulfilled. The world continued in its old course; and as event followed event, God's

voice could be heard to say: "My thoughts are not your thoughts."

Since then, Christians have tried again and again to make of Christianity a doctrine in which the activity of the ethical God and the course of events in the natural world are brought into harmony with each other. Never has the attempt been successful. Over and over again reality undermined the theories built up by faith, as an insidious flood saps the dike till it collapses and disappears.

Thus Christianity has had to give up one piece after another of what it still imagined it possessed in the way of explanations of the universe. In this development it grows more and more into an expression of what constitutes its real nature. In a remarkable process of spiritualization it advances further and further from naïve *naïveté* into the region of profound *naïveté*. The greater the number of explanations that slip from its hands, the more is the first of the Beatitudes, which may indeed be regarded as a prophetic word concerning Christianity, fulfilled: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

When Christianity becomes conscious of its innermost nature, it realizes that it is godliness

rising out of inward constraint. The highest knowledge is to know that we are surrounded by mystery. Neither knowledge nor hope for the future can be the pivot of our life or determine its direction. It is intended to be solely determined by our allowing ourselves to be gripped by the ethical God, who reveals Himself in us, and by our yielding our will to His.

All profound religion is mystical. To be freed from the world by being in God : that is the longing we have within us, so long as we do not numb ourselves in thoughtlessness. A union with God, however, which is realized through the intellectual act of " knowing," as conceived in the Eastern religions, must always remain a dead spirituality. It does not effect a re-birth, in God, into living spirituality. Living spirituality, real redemption from the world, cannot come but from that union with God which is ethically determined. The religions of the East are logical mysticism, Christianity alone is ethical mysticism.

Thus we go on our way through the world, not troubled about knowledge, but committing to God what we hope for, for ourselves and the world, and possessing all in all through being apprehended by the living, ethical God.

The first Christians expected the Kingdom of

God to come speedily, as a complete transformation of the natural world into a perfect one. We have become more moderate in our expectations. We no longer think of the Kingdom of God as extending over the universe. We limit it to mankind and look forward to it as to the miracle of God's spirit bringing all human spirits into subjection.

The generations preceding ours wanted to believe, and were able to believe, that the miracle would be performed in a steady, slow development. We, however, having lived through, and still living in, a time of appalling and meaningless events, feel as if a terrible tidal wave had flung us back, far away from the harbour of the Kingdom of God, towards which we now have to start out afresh, rowing hard against storm and tide, without being certain of really making headway. Thus we, too, like the early Christians, are taught by God the awful discipline of the word: "My thoughts are not your thoughts." He sets before us the difficult task of being faithful to the Kingdom of God as those who do not see and yet believe. We are able to accomplish that task, if we have been apprehended by Him.

When you preach the Gospel, beware of preaching it as the religion which explains everything.

I suppose that in England, as on the Continent, thousands and thousands of men have despaired of Christianity, because they have seen and experienced the atrocities of the War. Confronted with the inexplicable, the religion in which they believed to have an explanation for every thing has collapsed.

For ten years, before I left for Africa, I prepared boys in the parish of St. Nicolai, in Strasbourg, for confirmation. After the war some of them came to see me and thanked me for having taught them so definitely that religion was not a formula for explaining everything. They said it had been that teaching which had kept them from discarding Christianity, whereas so many others in the trenches discarded it, not being prepared to meet the inexplicable.

When you preach, you must lead men out of the desire to know everything to the knowledge of the one thing that is needful, to the desire to be in God, and thus no more to conform to the world but to rise above all mysteries as those who are redeemed from the world. "If only I have Thee, I care nothing for heaven and earth."[1] "All things work together for good to them that love God." Point men to these words as to the

[1] Ps. lxxiii, 25 (Luther).

peaks of Ararat, where they may take refuge when the flood of the inexplicable overwhelms all around.

I am almost afraid my presentation has been too one-sided, and I have spoken in a too exclusively philosophical way of Christianity and its contest with the other world-religions. Forgive me. I have, in so doing, followed my conviction; for Christianity, as the most profound religion, is to me at the same time the most profound philosophy.

In order to enter into contest with the other world-religions, Christianity must meet them in the whole depth of its simplicity. Face to face with that logical religious thought, it must not simply present itself as historical revelation. That would be an unsafe defence. Christianity cannot withstand that logical religious philosophy unless it shows its real character as the more profound and more deeply religious thinking. It must not only appeal to the historical revelation but also to that inward one which corresponds with, and continually confirms, the historical revelation. It must show that its attitude, in not claiming to be logical, self-contained knowledge, stands to reason, and that the inconsistencies and the

incompleteness in which it is content to remain are not errors in reasoning but inevitable imperfections of a philosophy which tries to go to the depth of things.

Christianity must, clearly and definitely, put before men the necessity of a choice between logical religion and ethical religion, and it must insist on the fact that the ethical is the highest type of spirituality, and that it alone is living spirituality. Thus Christianity shows itself as the religion which, penetrating and transcending all knowledge, reaches forward to the ethical, living God, who cannot be found through contemplation of the world, but reveals Himself in man only. And it is thus that Christianity speaks with all the authority of its inherent truth.

Wherever it is your task to speak for Christianity in its contest with the other world-religions, you must use none but these untainted spiritual means of defence.

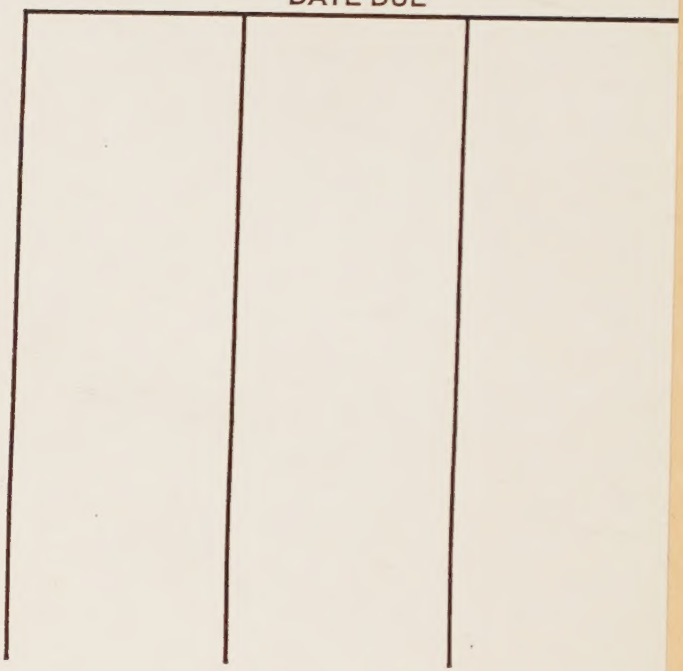
And you must do it in meekness of spirit. Profound truth knows no arrogance. Moreover, bitter humiliation awaits all of us who preach the Gospel in distant lands. "Where, indeed, is your ethical religion?"—that is the question we are asked, no matter whether we are among more primitive peoples in out-of-the-

way places or among the educated classes in the large centres of Eastern and African civilization. What Christianity has accomplished as the religion of love is believed to have been blotted out by the fact that it failed to educate the Christian nations to peaceableness, and that in the War it associated itself with so much worldliness and hatred, from which to this day it has not yet broken away. It has been so terribly unfaithful to the spirit of Jesus. When preaching the Gospel in the mission-field, let us not minimize this deplorable fact in any way nor try to gloss it over. And why have we fallen so low? Because we fancied it an easy thing to have the spirit of Jesus. Henceforward we must strive after that spirit much more seriously.

Preaching the Gospel in foreign lands to-day we are the advance-guard of an army that has suffered a defeat and needs to be made fit again. Let us be courageous advance-guards. The truth which the Gospel of Jesus carries within itself cannot be impaired by men's errors nor by their lack of faithfulness. And if only our lives, in genuine nonconformity to the world, reveal something of what it means to be apprehended by the living, ethical God, then something of the truth of Jesus goes out from us.

A word of Scripture which resounds with special meaning for us is the following, written by Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles: "The Kingdom of God is not in words but in power." That word makes us humble and at the same time fills our hearts with joy.

After having spent these hours together in concentrating our thoughts on the work to which we are called, we now go forth, some to this field and some to that, to do the work. Though scattered far and wide we are united in spirit, as those who desire to enter into God's will, and who believe that it is their calling to kindle in men a longing for that same experience.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